

## Washington State Career Lattice: Participation and Education Awards For Early Care & Education and School-Age Care Professionals

The Department of Early Learning is excited to encourage and support professional development through the [Washington State Career Lattice for Early Care & Education and School-Age Care Professionals](#). You can use the Career Lattice as a professional development tool to plan your career in early learning, including training and educational goals.

Made available through the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant opportunity, Early Care & Education (ECE) and School-Age (SA) professionals placed on the Career Lattice are able to request monetary awards beginning in January 2013 as recognition of their education, employment and training accomplishments.

### **How do I know which Career Lattice Step I'm on?**

You can view your Career Lattice step within the education section of your MERIT professional record. If you are not currently placed at a step on the Career Lattice, your record will say 'Uncalculated.'

### **How am I placed on the Career Lattice?**

Centralia College began placing professionals on the Career Lattice in spring 2012. The verification team automatically reviews your training, employment and educational information each time you submit an Education Application in order to place you appropriately on the Career Lattice.

If your educational information was verified prior to spring 2012, you may not have been placed on the Career Lattice yet. You will have the option to do so when you submit your Career Lattice Award application.

Placement on the lattice is based on at least one of the following criteria:

1. **Confirmed or verified employment** in a child care facility licensed or certified by the Department of Early Learning. Your employer or qualified administrator (such as a center director, family child care home licensee, or DEL licenser) has confirmed or verified that you work there. This information will display in the "status" column of your employment record as "confirmed/verified" with a DEL hand-print logo.
2. **State-approved training following the Washington Core Competencies** for Early Care & Education Professionals **or** Child & Youth Development Professionals. *A minimum of 2 hours in all areas of at least one core competency set* is required for Step 2. Mixed hours across sets are not eligible for placement. Continuing education trainings must be provided by a state-approved trainer under the new core competencies to be eligible. All 20 Hour basic education trainings and educational exemptions, earned at any time, are eligible.
3. **Verified education, including college coursework, certificates, credentials and degrees.** Please refer to Career Lattice for specific requirements for each step.

Please note that placement on the Career Lattice is not linear. While each step consists of gradually larger training and educational achievements, there are many ways to grow professionally. For example: 1) you do not need to be placed on Step 1, 2, 3 or 4 before you can be placed on Step 5; 2) you may be placed on Step 13 but not meet the requirements for Step 3.

### **What Career Lattice awards are available?**

**Participation Awards:** When you submit the award application, you are automatically given the one-time participation award for first-time placement on the Career Lattice at any step.

**Education Awards:** There are two types of Education Awards.

- 1) The first award type is based on "**pre-existing**" educational information. For the purposes of the RTT-ELC grant, we define "pre-existing" information as any educational achievements earned prior to January 2013. "Pre-existing" information is eligible for a one-time education award when initially placed on the Career Lattice at an eligible step, and will not be considered as "movement" for additional awards.

You may want to have this information verified prior to submitting a Career Lattice Award application in order to be placed at the highest eligible step and receive the largest educational award. If you submit

this information after you request an award, being placed at a higher step based on past educational movement will not make you eligible for more educational awards.

- 2) The second award type is based on "**movement**" on the Career Lattice. We define "movement" as moving from one step to a higher, award-eligible step during the RTT-ELC grant period from January 2013 to December 2015. To be considered as "movement," the educational achievement must have occurred during the RTT-ELC grant period.

Movement to a higher, eligible step during the grant period will allow you to earn additional educational awards; however, award amounts are not cumulative. For example: If you are initially placed at Step 7, you are eligible receive the award for Step 7. But, you would not be eligible to receive the awards for lower steps 2, 5, or 6 as a result. For movement purposes, you may subsequently be placed at Step 9, a higher, eligible step and therefore you would be eligible to receive the award for Step 9.

### **How do I request a Career Lattice Participation or Education Award?**

The Career Lattice Award application is accessed through your MERIT professional record. Simply sign in to MERIT, select the "Applications Tab," and select "Career Lattice Participation / Education Award."

If you are **currently placed at a step** on the Career Lattice, you will have the option to:

- 1) Submit your award application without any changes based on your current Career Lattice step. Your application will be accepted based on your current step without further review and will be submitted for payment; you will receive an email as confirmation. **OR,**
- 2) Exit the application in order to add more information to your professional record and be eligible for a higher placement on the Career Lattice. You can re-visit the application any time you are ready.

If you are **not currently placed at a step** on the Career Lattice, your record will say 'Uncalculated' which means you have not been placed yet. This may happen if you have educational information **verified in MERIT prior to spring 2012**. You may choose to:

- 1) Submit the award application if you are sure your record is up-to-date. The education verification team at Centralia College will review your full professional record for eligible step placement. You will receive an email as confirmation when your application is processed.
- 2) Wait to submit the Career Lattice Award application and add more information to your professional record via another Education Application. The education verification team at Centralia College will review your new educational information for eligible step placement. You will receive an email as confirmation when your application is processed and it will include your step on the Career Lattice if eligible. You may re-visit the Career Lattice Award application at any time.

### **How much would I receive if I'm eligible for an award?**

The education award amounts are currently valid for an 18-month pilot period, from January 2013 to June 2014. After this date, we may adjust the award amounts, but will continue offering awards until the end of the RTT-ELC grant or when funding runs out, whichever comes first.

<b>Eligible Career Lattice Step:</b>	<b>Award Amount:</b>
2	\$150
5	\$150
6	\$150
7	\$200
9	\$300
12	\$400
15	\$500

### **Are other resources available to help me?**

For more information about the Washington State Career Lattice and Professional Development, please visit: <http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional/Default.aspx>.

Watch our informational tutorials to help you. We've included examples and step-by-step guides for showing you everything you need to be ready to submit your Career Lattice Award application.